



September 9, 2021

**VIA Email to the Office of the Governor and Author**

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 118 (Kamlager) - Emergency services: community response: grant program - REQUEST FOR GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

**The League of Women Voters of California writes to request your signature on AB 118 (Kamlager).** In many counties across the state, community organizations are successfully responding to emergency situations. Despite their positive impact and the cost savings that community-oriented responses to emergencies present, California has done little to support and scale these efforts.

Instead, law enforcement officers continue to respond to emergencies that would be better addressed by community organizations with trained peer support experts, mental health providers, or crisis counselors. Too often, law enforcement responses increase harm to the individual experiencing the crisis and the presence of armed officers can unfortunately quickly escalate a crisis. In worst case scenarios, officers use force in response to a person in crisis, resulting in unnecessary and unjust deaths and serious bodily injury to those who simply need the care and support of trained professionals.

The League of Women Voters of California believes that crime prevention and promotion of public safety are the primary roles of state and local law enforcement agencies, and we recognize that mental health conditions, substance abuse, and homelessness are public health issues, not crimes. We further support a CRISES response that ensures that there will be a network of integrated services, clearly defined and consistent with a community support model.

The CRISES Act seeks to fill the void currently existing in community-based emergency response services for vulnerable populations so they can safely

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access quality emergency services that are culturally appropriate and from trained professionals with relationships and a track record of service in their communities.

The League supports AB 118 and the \$30 million budget request for funding to enable the state's Department of Social Services in the Health and Welfare Agency to establish rules and regulations for the administration of a five-year pilot of an emergency response grant program for community organizations. These grants will provide stability, safety, and culturally informed and appropriate responses to immediate emergency situations, as well as in the follow-up to those emergencies.

**AB 118 will move California in the right direction by supporting safer community-based alternatives to policing. The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports AB 118 and requests your signature.** Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carol Moon Goldberg  
President